

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 PPT-01 SCCT-01 EUR-12 L-03

H-02 DHA-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SY-05 USSS-00 SS-15

NSC-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00 /064 W

----- 008587

O R 231650Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7953

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMCONSUL DOUALA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOUI

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L COUTONOU 1966

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, CPRS, PINS, TO, DM

SUBJ: ALLEGED DETENTION OF US CITIS IN NORTHERN BENIN

REF A. ACCRA 8513 (NOTAL) B. STATE 300747 (NOTAL) C. COTONOU

1950 (NOTAL) D. STATE 300249 (NOTAL) E. COTONOU 1947

F. LOME 2808

1. EMBOFF RETURNED FROM DJOUGOU LATE THIS MORNING DEC 23
AND REPORTED HE COULD FIND NO TRACE OF AMCITS ALLEGEDLY IN
DETENTION THERE. HE INTERVIEWED OFFICIALS AT DISTRICT CHIEF'S
OFFICE (DISTRICT CHIEF WAS GONE), GENDARMES AT GENDARMERIE
BRIGADE POST (NCO IN COMMAND WAS ABSENT), OFFICIAL IN CHARGE
OF CUSTOMS/IMMIGRATION STATION (DJOUGOU IS A POINT OF ENTRY/
EXIST WITH TOGO, 35 KILOMETERS TO WEST) COMMISSIONER OF
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POLICE, OLD TIMER FRENCH PROTESTANT MISSIONARY (WHO WE

BELIEVE IS USUALLY WELL INFORMED), WIFE OF A GERMAN MISSIONARY, AND BENINOIS MANAGER OF THE DJOUGOU CAMPMENT (REST HOUSE FOR TOURISTS).

2. JDWLBOFF'S WFAUFFEUR, WHO HAD WORKED IN DJOUGOU SEVERAL YEARS AS A YOUNG MAN, CANVASSED MANY OF HIS OLD CONTACTS THERE, INCLUDING A CORPORAL AT GENDARMERIE POST AND MARKET WOMEN. WHILE ALL THE OFFICIALS AND OTHER PERSONS INTERVIEWED WERE POLITE, THEY APPEARED DUMBFOUNDED AND DISMISSED THE STORY AS FANCIFUL. NO ONE COULD RECALL THAT ANY AMERICANS HAD COME THROUGH IN RECENT WEEKS EXCEPT A FEW PCV'S WHO WORKED IN NORTHERN REGION OF BENIN.

3. POLICE COMMISSIONER TOOK EMBOFF ON TOUR OF DJOUGOU JAIL, WHICH WAS EMPTY, LET HIM EXAMINE HIS JOURNAL OF PERSONS BOOKED, AND SUGGESTED THAT EMBOFF MIGHT WANT TO EXTEND HIS INVESTIGATIONS TO PROVINCE CAPITAL OF NATITINGOU 50 MILES FURTHER NORTH, WHERE THERE IS A PRISON. CHIEF OF IMMIGRATION/CUSTOMS STATED THAT NO AMERICANS HAS PASSED THROUGH HIS STATION DURING PAST FEW MONTHS EXCEPT FOR TWO PCVS.

3. COMMENT: WHILE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN DJOUGOU TO ARREST SOME AMERICANS WITHOUT BOOKING THEM, AND SPIRIT THEM OFF TO ANOTHER TOWN FOLLOWING OUR TALK WITH THE DEPT. OF THE SURETE NATIONALE IN COTONOU TWO DAYS EARLIER, EMBOFF OR HIS CHAUFFEUR WOULD VERY LIKELY HAVE PICKED UP SOME CLUE OF ANY RECENT ARREST AND DETENTION OF FOUR WHITE MEN. DJOUGOU IS A COMPLETELY AFRICAN TOWN WITH ONLY THREE OR FOUR WHITE RESIDENTS; THE FEW WHITE PERSONS PASSING THROUGH WOULD BE NOTICED AND REMEMBERED. IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO ARREST AND TORTURE WHITE MEN IN THAT AREA WITHOUT REPORTS GETTING OUT THROUGH TOWNSFOLK LIKE MARKET WOMEN.

4. WHEN EMBOFF'S FRUITLESS SEARCH IN DJOUGOU IS VIEWED ALONGSIDE UNIFORMLY NEGATIVE REPORTS FROM ADDRESSEE WEST

AFRICAN POSTS, ACCRA'S REPORT THAT THERE IS NO RECORD OF THE "PAN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION" IN THAT CAPITAL AND DEPT'S FINDINGS THAT THE LOS ANGELES HERALD EXAMINER HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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NEVER HEARD OF FEENEY AND "CONTACTS" OF THE OTHER TWO ALLEGED AMERICANS WERE NON-EXISTENT, IT SEEMS INESCAPABLE THAT THE ALLEGATIONS ARE FRAUDULENT. END COMMENT.

5. FURTHER ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY THE EMBASSY:

A. I ORDER TO REPAIR ANY DAMAGE THAT OUR INITIAL PRESSURE IN THE CASE MAY HAVE CAUSED IN EMBASSY'S RELATIONS WITH PRB

AUTHORITIES, WE HAVE ALREADY INFORMED FORMINISTRY AND SURETE
NATIONALE THAT
WE NOW BELIEVE THE ALLEGATIOAS TO BE FALSE.
WE ALSO EXPRESSED REGRED FOR THE INCONVENIENCE AS WELL AS
APPRECIATIOAF FOR THE ASSISTANCE RENDERED IN DJOULOU TO OUR

CONSULAR OFFICER.

B. AFTER RECEIPT OF "NOTE FROM DR DOTSON" IN POUCH FROM
LOME, WE WILL ENDEAVOR ANALYZE IT, WITH A VIEW TO IDENTIFYING
THE PERPETRATORS OF THIS HOAX. WILL CABLE OUR OPINIONS SOONEST.

6. EMBASSY WISHES EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO DEPT AND INFO
ADDRESSEES FOR SPLENDID RAPID COOPERATION THAT ENABLED CLAR-
IFICATION OF THIS MATTER TO BE ACHIEVED IN ONLY TWO DAYS AND
A HALF.
ENGLE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CITIZEN PROTECTION, DETENTION, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COTONO01966
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750445-0704
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751216/aaaaanty.tel
Line Count: 132
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ACCRA 8513
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 AUG 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <09 DEC 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGED DETENTION OF US CITS IN NORTHERN BENIN
TAGS: CASC, CPRS, PINS, TO, DM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006